

OBSERVER

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OBSERVER

October 1 1980

REGISTRATION BEGINS

Mary Echeandia

The Selective Service System, the government agency in charge of registration for the draft, states that their interim figures prove that 93% of the male nineteen-and-twenty-year-old population base has registered for the draft.

In contrast, the Central Committee for Conscientious Objection believes that as much as 14% of the population base did not conform to the mandatory registration.

According to Jon Landau, attorney for the CCCO, "The discrepancy stems from the fact that the Selective Service System calculates its population base from the census statistics. We feel that the census figures are not accurate, and neither are the registration figures."

Landau added, "The only figures we have are those given to us by Selective Service. They are the only figures available. Selective Service claims that two hundred and eighty seven thousand (of those eligible) didn't register. We feel the number is much higher, maybe half a million. At this point we are asking to make an independent audit of the Selective Service's figures."

"Some people are fighting the registration in court," Landau concluded. "They feel that it's unconstitutional."

The Selective Service dates its interim figures "as of August 22nd". The Selective Service spokesman said, "Late registrations are still coming in. We plan on having more accurate totals when the post offices send in their tally sheets."

Out of 41 male Bard students eligible for the draft, 13 claim that they didn't register. This is equal to 32% of the eligible Bard population base. The males who didn't register wished to remain nameless, but stated their reasons for not registering.

One sophomore didn't register because he believes, "It (registration) isn't necessary at this time because there is no direct threat against the United States." Others felt similar to one freshman who didn't register: "I didn't register because I don't believe in the draft. I don't believe in killing people."

Another sophomore who registered, but registered as a conscientious objector, said, "It's unconstitutional because it deprives you of your personal liberty. It assumes you agree with governmental policy, and even if you don't you are willing to comply with their demands and bend to the will of bureaucrats who are so far removed from reality that no argument they can possibly submit is valid or substantial."

(Continued on page 2)

BARD ENROLLMENT OVER 740; HOUSING SHORTAGE CRITICAL

Tom Carroll

A dramatic increase in the number of returning students will place the total Bard enrollment over 740 for the Fall of 1980. The unexpected students have caused near-emergency measures to be taken by the Dean's Office in order to house all those who wish to live on campus. A report prepared by the Dean's Office in July showed that the absolute capacity for campus-housed students was 602, and presently 604 are residing in Bard dormitories.

The college did not actively attempt to increase their enrollment in order to gain more money to solve financial problems. Presently the fund raisers must raise over one million dollars each year in order for the school to break even. The body of new students admitted to Bard this Fall (Freshmen and transfers) will fall under the projected level of 270. An abundance of students returning from leaves of absence or moving from off-campus to on-campus facilities has created the shortage. The admissions office was forced to defer five transfer students admitted for the Fall until the Spring semester.

The increase of students took the college by surprise. Therefore, sufficient housing could not be obtained in time for the opening of school. South Hall Social Room, a centrally-located lounge, was converted into a large dorm room to temporarily house students waiting for permanent rooms. Every single deemed appropriate by the housing authorities was converted into a double room for the incoming Freshmen or transfers. Many Junior transfers are presently living in doubles converted from singles. Other forms of housing were investigated during the week before school started, once the crisis was confirmed, and Bard acquired two new places. The Barrytown House sits on the bank of the Hudson and borders the estate of the Unification Church (Moonie); it houses eight new people. The school also reacquired the Schyler House near Rhinebeck. (Continued on page 2)



REGISTRATION (from page 1)

Other students who did register for the draft felt that it was important to register. Said one, "It is the only way we're going to get countries like Iran to not push us around."

A senior who didn't have to register said, "I think everyone between the ages of 18 and 25 should have to register. Our foreign relations are on such thin strings that it might be necessary to start fighting a war tomorrow."

One further note: Any male found guilty of registration evasion is subject to a fine of \$10,000 and/or five years imprisonment. ■

ENROLLMENT (from page 1)

An attempt to discover why more returning students have come back to live on campus reveals an increase in the many forms of financial aid provided in either grants or loans, a lower attrition rate at Bard in general, the rising cost of living off-campus, and the high unemployment situation. Financial Aid revealed that the Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL) will increase over \$100,000 this year, the SEOG by \$16,000, and the Bard Scholarships by over \$98,000. This increase equals \$214,000 in more financial aid provided for over 450 Bard students than last year's class.

Michael Rosenthal, the new Asst. Academic Dean, has been charting Bard's attrition for close to ten years. The data for this year's class has not yet been fully gathered, but Mr. Rosenthal estimates that the rate will be very low. The figures will be available within two weeks.

However, the cost of living on campus rose over \$200 for this year. Most students still believe that living on-campus is cheaper considering the rise in rent and food costs.

Last year the number of students registered to take classes was 706. This will mean a slightly higher number of students per class, and some increased congestion at meals and in the bookstore. No plans exist at the present, however, to expand Bard by building more residential housing. The number of college-bound students will decline after this year, so the administration feels it would be inadvisable to expand. ■

STONE ROW

WHY I DID IT

WHY I DID IT AGAIN

C. Pemsler

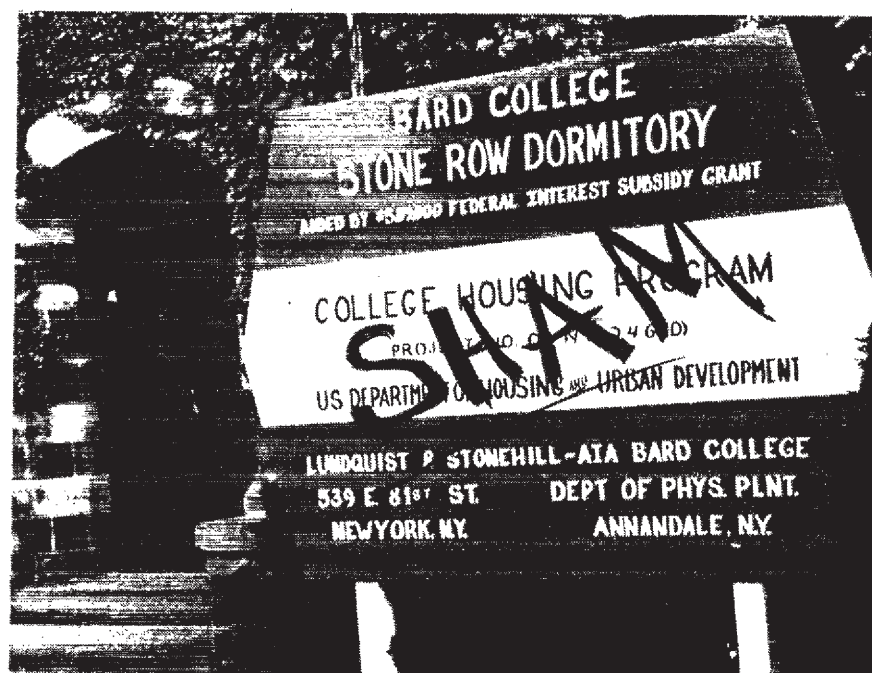
NOTE

This article was written for the unpublished last issue of the Bard Times after I (and two comrades) spray-painted SHAM on the large sign hanging from Stone Row.

When I moved out of my three room suite in Stone Row to a small room in Seymour in the spring of 1979, I was told that Stone Row would be finished by the spring of 1981. That's an awfully long time to renovate the building, I thought to myself, even if it is B & G doing the work. Well, it's been over a year and still hardly anything has been done. I mean, the graffiti is still there (okay by me) and some walls have been knocked down (a year ago) and that's about it. But what I want to know is -- are the beautiful stained glass windows in Dick Griffith's living room? This whole "renovation" is a SHAM. It was a SHAM from the start (moving people out in mid-year, transforming a space for four people into six stalls to be called bedrooms, and false promises of only a temporary housing shortage) and it is a SHAM now. They told us this shit two years ago when they began the scheme, and people made a big fuss. No one but the administration wanted this renovation. The Observer printed many riled people's views. Go back and check some old issues, this was a big deal. And what is it now? Another instance of being taken advantage of by the administration while we just hang out, as vacant as the Stone Row on the hill. Nothing has been done: ideal space is wasted, three people live in a social room, the mods have doubles, and the Bard Center progresses daily. If they had renovated Ludlow, would Dmitri's desk be in Sottery? I tell you, it's a SHAM. I knew that if I improved the ugly sign hanging on S. Hoffman it would be removed. That was the point. It was an eyesore on our beautiful campus. It was embarrassing. I hated it when IDP students and their parents saw that big ugly sign on Stone Row, the most ideal dorm on campus that no one can use. But what really gets me annoyed is that nobody cares. If there were any real respect for the building, why did it take so long to remove the sign after it was improved??? Renovate Ludlow! ■

As I walked by Stone Row, just a scant twelve hours before graduation, I glanced up at our beloved dormitory. Lo and behold, the building had sprouted a beautiful sculpture right on top of the chimney. Arranged most expressionistically, there was a desk, a shovel, a pile of vile matter, and a word: SHAM. On the sidewalk below, lacquered on the earth, were the words: PROFIT BEFORE EDUCATION. Was Stone Row trying to tell us something?

I awaited the next day with a sense of pride, knowing that all the trustees and families and friends would share the SORROW of Stone Row. I awoke the next day to find that it had vanished. Was it a mirage, or was it a cover-up? Leon? ■



liberal arts

and EDUCATION

Mark Hambleton

"The problem of policy-making in our society confronts the difficulty that revolutionary changes have to be encompassed and dealt with by an increasingly rigid administrative structure ... an increasing amount of energy has to be devoted to keeping the existing machine going, and in the nature of things there isn't enough time to enquire into the purpose of these activities. The temptation is great to define success by whether one fulfills certain programs, however accidentally these programs may have been arrived at. The question is whether it is possible in the modern bureaucratic state to develop a sense of long-range purpose and to inquire into the meaning of the activity." Henry Kissinger was speaking of the government when he said the above, but this is a problem in any and all bureaucracies. In terms of education this becomes an even more important dilemma, for an institution of higher learning is teaching people how to act in later activities. If you become a stockbroker or an avant-garde artist, the mark of your education is evident. And because of factors like nuclear and biochemical technology, it is evident that it is important what kind of mark that education puts on you.

The Liberal Arts and Sciences have evolved from what used to be termed philosophy. It used to be how the rich killed time. As Thomas Hobbes said, "Leisure is the mother of philosophy; and Commonwealth the mother of peace and leisure." Now it has its own bureaucracy within the system. Leon Botstein is considered by many to be the one to talk to if you want to know about liberal arts education.

Leon told me that higher education for the most part provides only a certifying function "in support of certain economic characteristics," teaching only how to "function" in technical ways. That is to say it forms the student to "fit in" to the existing society. Leon pointed out that higher education had basically lost its function in forming a sense of responsibility or common purpose. Because of this there is growing friction between anti-intellectualism and elitism. To bridge this gap, Leon feels the task that faces Bard is whether it "can create, or cement, or engender, or whatever verb you want to use, the belief that serious learning, serious self-development (not really to getting a degree but getting it to get a job) is an essential imperative." I asked Leon if he thought that higher education and BARD were going towards this idea of serious learning, and he stated, "higher education no; BARD yes," because "BARD wishes essentially to do it right."

So then the point of a liberal arts education is essentially to get a job. "We're in the business of making people function," stated Leon. This idea is quite clear in the hierarchy of BARD. When I asked Stuart Levine, the new combined Dean of academic and social affairs, what the point of the liberal arts education was, he said, "It is to produce a citizen who can function in our society." Only Joe Murphy, the president of Bennington College, raised the question "Should we teach people to function in a corrupt society?"

Leon doesn't think in such terms. We are in a "continuum of intellectual tradition", he told me. But has the liberal arts and Bard merely fallen into the rut of maintaining this continuum without inquiring into the "long range purpose"? About five years ago, just before Leon became president,

there was much criticism that the Dean's Office was not fully defined. Now, Leon told me, "I'm confident we've licked the problem of the Dean's Office." I interviewed Stuart Levine, who has been at Bard for sixteen years, to shed some light on the attitudes of that office. When I asked him what he thought of the registration, he said he thought it had gone very well. When I said I was talking about draft registration, he told me that he hadn't really thought about it. When I asked him to comment on the growing personal indulgence and apathy in society and at BARD, he said that this is a cynical myth. "I don't see apathy... people aren't selfish... I see students who are concerned and active." Within a bureaucracy it is important that the offices are well defined.

I asked Leon if he thought there was an ignorance of the real facts in society. He stated that the real problem and the object of the liberal arts is to educate people so they can understand when they are being led astray.

"Now I don't know very much about nuclear power, but I know enough to know that somebody is telling me these are the facts and his business card says Texaco or Exxon, and then there's somebody who's an environmentalist saying well these are the facts, well, the problem isn't that there really is a fact beneath it all. There are varieties of facts which are based on varieties of assumptions on what's the best thing for society." So what is really important is to see both sides of the argument, not to do anything about it. "There are very reasonable, well educated people with degrees from all over the place who believe in everything from all out nuclear war, to tactile nuclear war, to conventional warfare," he said. But isn't there something wrong when the spokesman of liberal arts and the president of the only institution fulfilling the goals of higher education can term someone advocating mass destruction reasonable and well-educated? Isn't there a failing when the attitude which allows and promotes the threat of total destruction is seen not as a stark reality which must be changed, but as "the ultimate existential political context in which we live"?

A liberal arts education seems to better fulfill the criterion for business and the military than to help solve such problems as racism, ignorance, or destruction. It tries to be career-oriented while maintaining its intellectuality, and so ends in merely being an elitist institution following the guidelines of the establishment. We do not need more of the type of intellectuals Leon Botstein refers to to solve the problems of today and tomorrow. We need many many more people who are educated; people educated to feel and act as well as think. Just because the arts are given great value is not enough. It must be asked as with everything: What end are they being put to? Hitler was an art lover. This then is the key problem with the liberal arts education. It concerns itself with "how?" not "why?". Is the liberal arts education an elitist escape from the many serious problems which face us today, or is it an institution in which both the students and the educators are mindful of the consequences of education? Is the institution merely a reflection of the sad state of our world, or is it a key part in the process of reforming and saving society? It is unfortunate when this potential is not realized and the liberal arts education can be said to be just another bureaucracy. If you have any suggestions as to how this institution might be improved, write the OBSERVER or Leon Botstein. ■

NOTE:

This space was originally to be used just as an explanation of the new editorial policy of the Observer -- how we are going to make drastic improvements on what has been abused as a newspaper; how we are going to hold to a regular, frequent schedule of issues (every two weeks, to be exact) with improved reporting of campus and outside events, regular columnists, and a change in format to keep everybody's eyes open. However, before we even get an issue out, something more important has come up; so this space is put to the observed priorities of the student body and what exactly they imply.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS**APOCALYPSE NOW****the students' attitude at BARD**

"No matter how well educated people may be in the traditional sense, they cannot understand the world in which they live and operate unless journalism gives them some understanding of what is happening outside their own sphere of knowledge and action."

Charles E. Silberman
Crisis in the Classroom

Did you know that BARD was on the earth? Did you know that there are also enough deadly weapons and poisons on the earth today to destroy all forms of life on the planet, and the planet itself, many times over? Do you care? BARD students have shown clearly that they care not to know any of these things, but are much more interested in catering to their own personal indulgence. BARD unfortunately has been invaded by the same attitude which hails Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter as the only choices for President in these times of growing tension and instability. BARD students have made a decision to escape in a microcosm rather than face the stark truths of right NOW! YOU ARE AFFECTED BY THIS. They would rather waste time, money, and energy on creating their own reality rather than accept what are already facts and try and change them. This is nothing particularly new; it is such personal indulgence which is the cause of all the problems in the world.

It is interesting to see, though, that the same attitude which promotes war, elitism, exploitation, and ignorance has once again become the focus of the students, a group which was once the strong arm of freedom, equality, solidarity, and awareness.

What action of the students has already reinforced this trend of BARD students? The proposed allocation of student monies. This has been done by the seven-person planning committee. What are the qualifications for such a difficult position?

The only qualification is getting elected. What this means is, in fact, having enough pull at the student senate meeting to gain votes and office. Because only about 10% of the student body is represented at a good showing, the representatives who hold positions affecting all 700 are elected by less than a third of the whole. This implies that the majority, which allows this to happen by ignoring the running of the student government, reinforces and is happy with the decisions which are made by its representatives. Their silence is sufficient affirmation. So then, by direct or indirect affirmation, the representatives that say who gets what money (the most important function of the student government) speak for everyone. And they have spoken.

Of \$29,000.00 and 22 proposed budgets, three facts are evident, which show just where the planning committee and the Bard community are at:

- 1) \$11,000.00, more than one-third of the money, was given for film and entertainment purposes.
- 2) Smaller minority groups had their budgets cut sometimes by half, sometimes by as much as two-thirds, and some were ignored.
- 3) The only news publication which goes to all students, faculty, and trustees was asked to go outside the college to find support (to the tune of \$3,800.00, or two-thirds of its budget).

Each of these facts underlines the same points which mark the failings of our society today: factionalism, escape, and ignorance. Although this may fit in with today's definition of a liberal arts college, this is the attitude which incites not education, but obliteration. If this is the attitude of tomorrow's leaders, GOD HELP US! When students can be so rightly characterized, it is time to either change the definition of "student", or call these people the elitist, fatalistic, closedminded jerks that they are. It's certainly a sad day to be a student, anywhere, and especially at BARD.

The Editors



STUDENT GOVERNMENT

how? & why?

Alice Knapp

All right, well, I guess it's worthwhile mentioning. You all should have some knowledge of how Bard's somewhat unique student government is set up. It's a forum. In other words, every member of the student body is a member of the student government. Whatever group of people shows up at a meeting is the government that day -- certified. Now, to keep things somewhat organized, meetings are scheduled, publicized, and run by the Central Committee, which is comprised of: a) the chairman of the Planning Committee -- responsible for allocating student convocation fees to the various student clubs and organizations; b) the chairman of the Educational Policies Committee (EPC) -- self-explanatory; c) the chairman of the Student Judiciary Board (SJB) -- pet fines, traffic violations, suspensions, etc.; d) the secretary -- minutes, scheduling meetings, organizing agendas; and e) the coordinator of ad-hoc committees -- a new position we created last year to organize all the odds-and-end committees (security committee, board of trustee representatives, etc.) for proper representation at forum meetings.

Being an enlightened and benevolent sort of government, these positions are all salaried, averaging about \$100 a piece per semester. In the further interests of a degree of organization and efficiency, some attention is paid to Parliamentary Procedure, or some such thing; maybe Robert's Rules of Order, but be suspicious of those demanding strict adherence to these laws. The members of the Central take turns chairing meetings, except the Secretary, who only emerges from minute-taking to chair election meetings. Meetings are held as often as they need to be, or as often as there are sufficient items on the agenda to warrant it. So if you have an item for the agenda, just go talk to the secretary -- Tom Kelly, I believe it is this year. Oh, and everything is decided on by vote -- none of this absentee ballot shit. A show of hands is usually adequate.

Ten related noteworthy points:

- 1) Student receptivity to change is surprisingly low. The students acknowledge, as a given, that structure and law are supreme, necessary for the maintenance of order and stability and rational forward movement.
- 2) The Forum is its own law. It can do whatever it wants. If there is a problem it should be att-

acked, solutions must be applied, errors analyzed, plans modified, plans introduced. Last year's government was very obliging to its Central Committee, and agreed to all proposed modifications. If something in it doesn't work out, get rid of it. Change is a prerequisite for progress.

- 3) Beer. People who argue against beer at meetings are probably those who dispute the validity of salaries. These puritanistic rumbles center around the base premise that the committed are selfless. The basic argument runs that those who are interested will come regardless, and those who are enticed only by the beer shouldn't be there. They forget that politics and collective action are hard work, and the good hostess always offers her company a drink.
- 4) People seem to have a difficulty in listening to another speak. Meetings get long, and people become so engrossed in attempting to get recognized, that they often end up repeating something said earlier. This is unproductive.
- 5) The Forum is a communications link between the student body and other elements of the Bard community. Keeping tabs on things is its business. To this end it is aided by the various committees that pop up to attack the different areas.
- 6) ORGANIZATION. Organization is essential for effectiveness. At this point in life, the student should be becoming increasingly aware of the role of APPLICATION in successful enterprise.
- 7) The Forum is an opportunity to exercise direct democracy. Individuals in society have long recognized the importance of representation in matters of societal decision-making. Given the choice, the individual's natural inclination is to represent himself in matters regarding his well-being. This is your chance.
- 8) One of the great appeals of the Bard community is its democratic potential. The community is small, all aspects are accessible. Support for such concepts as inter-disciplinary and inter-generational studies indicates a positive degree of support for cooperative ventures.
- 9) It does not do to antagonize those you wish to communicate with, or those you are dependent upon. And, don't forget, the individual is dependent upon society.
- 10) A truly democratic society can be an awesome political force. ■

WXBC

To those of you who tuned in to the official organ of mass communication, WXBC 620 AM, last year, it is well known that the radio station was a very loosely-run organization. When it was on the air at all, it was a platform of individuals' opinions, likes, and dislikes; and, at one time or another, every DJ has spouted some statement that he/she would be embarrassed to have heard by someone they respected. Many listeners, who weren't in on the joke of being a DJ with the ability to say whatever one wished, never turned on WXBC and resented having to listen to it at select hours in the Commons.

Well, you people are either going to have to stuff your ears with wax or get used to the idea of WXBC -- the station will be back on the air before you know it.

Full operation is expected by October 1st; partial broadcasting will be in effect by at least the fifteenth of this month. The difficulties in the opening of WXBC to the airwaves this year have mostly to do with the new campus telephone system; as the radio broadcasts through the telephone lines on campus, the old system was badly disrupted by the installation of the new phones. According to the official WXBC spokesman, the Red Hook Telephone Company has promised partial and full reparation of the lines by the dates mentioned earlier.

The staff of WXBC is small but select. It consists of the following people: Spike Henderson, radio station head and chief technician; Doug Henderson (no relation), technician; Nancy Solitaire, programming director; Charles Lenk, executive secretary; and Suzanne LaMuniere, assistant secretary. Each of these people welcomes inquiries about the radio station, although they will probably be referred to Spike. Or, if you wish, the radio station PO box is #620, and the phone number is 758-5508.

The only immediate difference between the WXBC of a year ago (during Ray Ricker's despotic reign) and the station of today is the regularity of the programming. The station will broadcast Bard programming from 4 pm to 12 midnight every day, and Kingston Top 40 for the rest of the time. New DJs are always welcome; see Nancy if you are interested. Small changes have been made in the station's electrical system and interior decoration, but the biggest changes, by way of new equipment, are due sometime later this semester. Even so, the station will be functional and broadcasting in the Commons and most dorms sometime near the beginning of October.

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POPULIST MANIFESTO

(FOR POETS, WITH LOVE)

Poets, come out of your closets,
Open your windows, open your doors,
You have been holed-up too long
in your closed worlds.
Come down, come down
from your Russian Hills and Telegraph Hills,
your Beacon Hills and your Chapel Hills,
your Mount Analogues and Montparnasses,
down from your foot hills and mountains,
out of your tepees and domes.
The trees are still falling
and we'll to the woods no more.
No time now for sitting in them
As man burns down his own house
to roast his pig.
No more chanting Hare Krishna
while Rome burns.
San Francisco's burning,
Mayakovsky's Moscow's burning
the fossil-fuels of life.
Night & the Horse approaches
eating light, heat & power,
and the clouds have trousers.
No time now for the artist to hide
above, beyond, behind the scenes,
indifferent, paring his fingernails,
refining himself out of existence.
No time now for our little literary games,
no time now for our paranoias & hypochondrias,
no time now for fear & loathing,
time now only for light & love.
We have seen the best minds of our generation
destroyed by boredom at poetry readings.
Poetry isn't a secret society,
It isn't a temple either.
Secret words & chants won't do any longer.
The hour of *oming* is over,
the time of keening come,
a time for keening & rejoicing
over the coming end
of industrial civilization
which is bad for earth & Man.
Time now to face outward
in the full lotus position
with eyes wide open,
Time now to open your mouths
with a new open speech,
time now to communicate with all sentient beings,
All you 'Poets of the Cities'
hung in museums, including myself,
All you poet's poets writing poetry
about poetry,
All you poetry workshop poets
in the boondock heart of America,
All you house-broken Ezra Pounds,
All you far-out freaked-out cut-up poets,
All you pre-stressed Concrete poets,
All you cunnilingual poets,
All you pay-toilet poets groaning with graffiti,
All you A-train swingers who never swing on birches,
All you masters of the sawmill haiku
in the Siberias of America,

All you eyeless unrealists,
All you self-occulting supersurrealists,
All you bedroom visionaries
and closet agitpropagators,
All you Groucho Marxist poets
and leisure-class Comrades
who lie around all day
and talk about the workingclass proletariat,
All you Catholic anarchists of poetry,
All you Black Mountaineers of poetry,
All you Boston Brahmins and Bolinas bucolics,
All you den mothers of poetry,
All you zen brothers of poetry,
All you suicide lovers of poetry,
All you hairy professors of poesie,
All you poetry reviewers
drinking the blood of the poet,
All you Poetry Police—
Where are Whitman's wild children,
where the great voices speaking out
with a sense of sweetness and sublimity,
where the great new vision,
the great world-view,
the high prophetic song
of the immense earth
and all that sings in it
And our relation to it—
Poets, descend
to the street of the world once more
And open your minds & eyes
with the old visual delight,
Clear your throat and speak up,
Poetry is dead, long live poetry
with terrible eyes and buffalo strength.
Don't wait for the Revolution
or it'll happen without you,
Stop mumbling and speak out
with a new wide-open poetry
with a new commonsensual 'public surface'
with other subjective levels
or other subversive levels,
a tuning fork in the inner ear
to strike below the surface.
Of your own sweet Self still sing
yet utter 'the word en-masse'—
Poetry the common carrier
for the transportation of the public
to higher places
than other wheels can carry it.
Poetry still falls from the skies
into our streets still open.
They haven't put up the barricades, yet,
the streets still alive with faces,
lovely men & women still walking there,
still lovely creatures everywhere,
in the eyes of all the secret of all
still buried there,
Whitman's wild children still sleeping there,
Awake and walk in the open air.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

MUSIC PHYSICS MATHEMATICS PHILOSOPHY HISTORY ANTHROPOLOGY POLITICAL STUDIES STUDIO ART LANGUAGES FILMS SOCIOLOGY RELIGION
 ART HISTORY DRAMA WOMEN'S STUDIES DANCE BIOLOGY PREMED PHOTOGRAPHY LITERATURE ECOLOGY CREATIVE WRITING CHEMISTRY ENGINEERING
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DEPT'S.



THE THEATER EPIC

8 YEARS AND WHAT ?

Jennifer Hall

The unfinished Art Center stands, stark and modern under the whistling pine trees, made more anonymous by the grey cinderblocks and scaffolding that design its exterior. So it has stood for nearly eight years, since construction on the Edith C. Blum Art Center, Studios, and Theater began back in 1972.

"Not only is the date of completion undetermined," Natalie Lunn says wryly across her desk on the first Monday morning of classes, "the theater has not even been designed yet."

And yet Natalie feels that it is not unrealistic to expect to see her students performing, possibly next year, in the new theater. "But only God and Leon can say that for sure! I'm sure they have nightmares about it every night."

She says she understands reality in theater, and has managed to live with inadequate facilities for quite some time. Although it is difficult, and at times exhausting and depressing for her and her students to operate under adverse conditions, they also derive from this a certain amount of pride. It is like a very challenging game to get shows on, and she says one grows rather fond of shortcomings and lack of space.

She has no resentment, but does not approve of the proposal to use the scene shops at the new studios as another black box theater like Preston. Eventually, there are to be two theaters: the main theater for drama productions only, and the other for speakers, cultural events, choir, or the orchestra, which now must rehearse or perform in the chapel or dining commons.

(Continued on page 8)

EDUCATION MUST HAVE A REVOLUTION

Laura Mc Clure

The language/literature division is famous for its snobbery. Literature, in general, tends to be a stuck-up realm; the martini circuit of academia. Literature has a tradition which it is bent on maintaining through educational institutions. A very basic example of this tradition is the book-worship phenomena -- that all literary texts of any enduring strength are hallowed and untouchable by (especially) the plebe student. This prevents anyone from truly entering whatever text is at hand, and makes literature students into worshippers rather than cognitive beings who are capable of taking part in the work of a fellow being.

Another aspect of the "literary" attitude is the divisional distinction between writing and "creative" writing. All persons in the literature division write ... why, then, are some considered "creative" and others not? Are only the "creative" writers at liberty to respond and take part in written material because they too are writers? When a person writes anything, from a term paper to a newspaper article, it is a creative and subjective act and should be recognized as such. Some teachers complain about the dry and academic nature of student papers, but can response be of any other nature when the texts at hand are treated as though they have been written by someone immortal? It seems to be forgotten that someone who reads is also someone who writes.

This rampant idolatry for certain texts becomes idolatry for certain teachers. Fan clubs form within the division. This, of course, raises the question of which comes first, idolatry of some book through some teacher, or idolatry for some teacher through a certain book. If a text is treated as sacred, then the one who is able to touch the text (the teacher) must be some kind of literary guru who deserves obeisance. Thus, the prevalent idolatry of the department spreads into ever-increasing rings of worship, continually perpetuating the attitude that to touch is sacrilege. Literature courses become about texts rather than within texts. The same goes for literary response, which becomes one remove, or two or three, from the reading. Response is an extension of the reading, a thought or expression which unfolds from the work and is not outside of it.

(Continued on page 8)

from page 7...

Of course, the problems within the language/literature division are familiar within every division. Teacher worshipping is rampant, and even promoted, at every institution. Rampant, also, is the myth of the major, that an individual can and will restrict him/her self to only one thing. "Majoring" in any one given discipline promotes secularity, alienation, promotes comparison and value judgement. How can any person understand the work he or she does when his/her experience is confined to one realm? How can anyone begin to understand psychology without religion, history, and literature? Liberal arts education strives to overcome this "nose-to-the-grindstone" attitude and yet it has become the breeding ground for it.

It is not unlikely that one might hear from a literature major that having an art course is easy, taken as a relief course and not as a serious pursuit. This is also the problem of divisions and majoring. And then there is the issue of who is and who is not a major in any given area which is the determining factor of which course that person might have and which activities one might be involved in. There are some seniors who have never been admitted to an introduction to dance course or a foundations in art course because placement is reserved for freshman majors. This kind of departmental secularity is detrimental to all, for one's interests are never singular and cannot be forced into merely one realm of pursuit.

The situation at Bard is perhaps more difficult than at other institutions. Bard is an institution that tries to pretend it isn't an institution, and therefore one never really knows where one stands. Requirements are intermittent and paradoxical. Most people do not care about any of the conflicts within Bard, unless they directly affect one's premeditated path. Only when an individual comes up against some bureaucratic impasse does one ever hear any thought about what goes on around here. And then the anger fades, constructs remain the same, and each person goes on about his singular business. ■

PUNK, FUNK, AND JUNK,

L. J. Kondrat

If you walk into Procter Art Center right now through the end of September, you can wander around a wide range of contemporary work. This group show consists of seventeen sculptors from New York City and was organized by the Art Department's favorite son, Tom Wolf.

This show of funk, punk, and junk sculpture requires of the viewer only an open ~~MINI~~ EYE. The pieces range from a Martin Silverman cast bronze dancer which is reminiscent of the jazz era of the 20s to the minimalist spokesman Carl Andre's zinc and steel checker board squares resting flat on the floor. The issues raised by an almost two-dimensional object occupying a three dimensional space may cause problems for some. The forced question "Is it art?" and the naive assertion "Oh, I could have done that" are unavoidable.

Steven Kramer's mechanical box prompts the viewer to look through a window at a theatre full of mice. By pushing a button on the front of the box, the mice on stage perform, the crowd applauds wildly, and the viewers laugh. Instant gratification. From present to past, we move to Richard Van Buren's aluminum monolith around the corner. Speckled with colored glass and mica, this thing stands erect and proud. Van Buren says that his piece is about process (or how it came to be). By leaving the pouring spout for the molten aluminum, Van Buren gives us a clue to the process. It also serves as support for the piece, which leans forward slightly.

The haphazard manner in which John Morton's fiberglass factory was put together earns it the latest label of "punk". Through the translucent green walls and the clean windows we see the sloppy handling of the material but we can not see inside -- just like the Helmsley Building on 11th Avenue and 33rd Street. The only opening to this imposing 8 ft. by 6 ft. structure is the small entrance to the factory located inches above the floor. This piece is about the raw, and about violence -- something that is lacking in the Art Department.

But, with the season opening of this sculpture show comes hope. Hop that the department can recover from the rampant apathy that ruled last year;

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OBSERVER STAFF 1980

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THEATER EPIC (from page 7)

A third floor has been added to the original scheme, to be used for "Bard Center stuff", but Natalie feels this is "unfeasible, because the drama program can absorb the space, whether for scene shops or rehearsal spaces. Classrooms must be used only for drama/dance."

About any interrelationship in the arts, Natalie says that it happens independently at Bard, if at all. The gallery of the new Art Center will be related to the lobby of the theater, and students should exhibit their work there. Also, film students often use drama students as actors. But the student must be responsible for any interaction, because the teachers here are all specialists. "To learn, you have to spend time with people who specialize. Otherwise, things get watered down. Generalism only increases generalism."

The Art Department is a substantial part of Bard, but according to Natalie, does not get enough attention. "It has infinitely greater needs, and should be put on a priority level. Money is the problem. That's why the Art Center is not finished. There is a time lapse between donations and reality. Costs go up."

In any event, drama/dance has big plans for the year. Planned for this fall are three faculty directed shows (Little Boxes, Waiting for Godot, and A Night at the Opera), two dance concerts, and a repertory of student-directed plays, which will go up last. ■

AYATOLLAH ROCK N' ROLLA

Marty Thau's 2x5 is supposed to be a document of the current generation of New York Bands (the first generation being the N. Y. Dolls, the Ramones, Television, etc.), but in reality it is a prime example of the inconsistency and elitism that mars the current scene. Some of the best bands in New York aren't represented while some horrendous ones are. Bands like the Fleshtones and the Student Teachers are good live, but have failed to transmit that feeling to vinyl. The other bands represented on this compilation are the Comateens, the Revelons, and the Bloodless Pharoahs. Of all these bands, the Fleshtones seemed as if they'd be the one band to profit most from the compilation. Alas, things do not always work out as they should. The Fleshtones' two contributions are lifeless and totally unmoving, unlike their first single, which was a minor classic. Who could resist dancing to Critical List or American Beat? The Pharoahs' tunes are overindulgent and terminally uninteresting. After listening to the Student Teachers on record, I am of the belief that they should go back to their nice East Side high schools. Next up is the Revelons, and they are a revelation! "Red Hot Woman" is exactly that, red hot! It's your typical rock-n-roll rave-up but with a lethal punch, provided by the ever-pounding rhythm section. "Cindy" is another winner from the Revelons. By far, the band which has really got me convinced is the Comateens. Their "Late Night City" is the LP's killer track. It is a direct descendant of the Doors' "L. A. Woman" and the J. Geils Band's "Chimes". All three tracks delve into the mystic bond between a city at night and one person's ultimate love for it. While the Doors and the J. Geils Band define the bond and explore the seamy side of the city, the Comateens simply say, "Late Night City, ain't nothing so pretty". It is direct, hard-hitting, and truthful. This isn't to say that the Teens aren't literate or philosophical, but, at this point in time, maybe a bit more naive. I anxiously await the day that the Comateens come out with an album. The promise has been made, it only has to be fulfilled.

RATING: THREE KEGS

Roky Erikson, leader and founder of the legendary Texas psychedelic band The 13th Floor Elevators, is back with a new band; The Aliens, and a new record. At one time Roky was the sixties' reigning acid casualty, spending a number of years in an insane asylum. (For more info, read the liner notes in Epitaph for a Legend, International Artists, LP #13.) But he's back with a vengeance that knows no bounds. From the opening cut, "Two Headed Dog (Red Temple Prayer)" to "Stand for the Fire Demon", the closing track, Roky and the band rock fervently, weaving tales of monsters and demonic possession.

The production by Stu Cook, of Creedence Clearwater Revival fame, is clean and crisp. Duane Aslaksen's guitar is perfectly matched by the electric auto-harp of Bill Miller, while the rhythm section pounds away as if they've been together since birth. While some may find Roky's lyrics a bit obscure, overall the record is an album that should set the tone for the new decade. Roky Erikson is my candidate for comeback artist of the year!

RATING: THIRTEEN KEGS

CURRENT EVENTS:

Jonathan Richmond has a new LP coming out soon on Beserkly entitled Jonathan Richmond Sings ... More news for Modern Lovers fans: two previously unreleased tracks by the original Lovers produced by Kim Fowley -- "I'm Straight" and "Government Center" -- have been released on a new Warner Bros. lossleaders LP, Troublemakers ... Rory Gallagher will have a new live album out in late fall called Stage Struck ... New York's own Revelons will put out their first album on their own label sometime in the near future ... Handsome Nick Manitoba, formerly of the Dictators, has been working as a roadie for Steve Forbert, and has told a close source that he'll probably never sing in a rock-n-roll band again ...

KEG RATINGS:

- 1 KEG -- A dud hand grenade
- 2 KEGS -- A rising cruise missile
- 3 KEGS -- A wavering B-1 bomber
- 4 KEGS -- A flock of F-111s dropping a load of napalm
- 5 KEGS -- A neutron bomb
- ABOVE 5 KEGS -- All-out nuclear war

THE AVID READER: WHAT IS WRONG WITH STEPHEN KING ?

Andrew Joffe

What is wrong with Stephen King?

His books sell millions of copies in both hard-cover and paperback, and are made into profitable films. He is good at his craft, with a talent for building suspense. He has a fertile imagination, a neat turn of phrase, and his books have more substance than most popular literature.

So what is wrong with Stephen King?

Nothing. Except that his books have the potential to be better than they are. It is too easy, for all their merit, to dismiss them as potboilers, as escapist entertainment with no substance. Not that his millions of fans care much. But then, these same fans will read King's marvelous The Dead Zone along with Peter Straub's terrible Ghost Story and find no qualitative difference. A horror story is a horror story.

Part of the problem is the genre itself. Horror stories, while always popular, were never perfectly respectable. There is something in the human makeup that finds fear irresistibly appealing, but only if it is absolutely safe. Synthetic thrills, placebos for real danger, especially in times of real danger. (The Depression coincided with the "Golden Age" of horror films.) Yet, although certain works of horror fiction are critically acclaimed ex-post-facto, the majority remain outside the realm of serious work.

This is the fate of Stephen King's books. If they do survive for any appreciable length of time, it will be as a series of Dover reprints, oddities read by aficionados for historical interest.

King's books are about gifted individuals using their gifts in reaction to their society. This is a theme that runs throughout King's work, be it Carrie telekinetically taking bloody revenge in Carrie, or Danny psychically rescuing his mother in The Shining. Usually, these individuals are young, or have acquired their powers when young, and are very sensitive to parental and family pressures, which figure largely in the books. Parents can be villain-types (as in Carrie and The Shining), heroes or heroines (also The Shining), or direct bestowers of individuality on their gifted children (Firestarter). In all cases, King portrays the destruction of the family and abusive parents as connected to some powerful evil. These themes, however, are effectively obscured by King's tendency to clutter and literalize.

(Continued on page 10)





OBITUARY

Bruce "Guts" Venda

I was really pissed when I heard about Art Carlson's death. I thought some inconsiderate fucker was using it as a rumor to capitalize on his absence from the surroundings. Someone else told me that Art placed a stipulation in his will that, in case of his premature demise, the SAGA beverage boys would never let the breakfast coffee taste any good. That may be true, but if it isn't it's an even cheaper rumor than his death itself would have been.

Then someone hit me with the facts of the matter. Art, as I knew, had moved to Albany, ostensibly to collect welfare and re-form a band. The real purpose behind this venture, however, was not discovered until Art's disappearance some weeks ago. But, well, everyone knows all these things now. Not only was it not sensible, it wasn't chic to suspect that Art was not the son of a Maryland preacher, as he so maintained. But to imagine that he was the long-lost son of Fatty Arbuckle was beyond anyone's capacity, and that was it.

That Art's real purpose in going to Albany was to resurrect his decadent father's house of sensual pleasures there was not so surprising. It was so totally ludicrous I had to believe it. And thereafter began, and still continues, one of the worst bouts with despair that I have ever waged.

But none of this information was known to us when we knew him. And so, I deem it meet to talk of Art as he was: the good-natured buffoon who threw such powerful brain-waves that most people at school actually thought he could play sax and sing with his various bands. I was one of the few people he let in on the secret that his low IQ made it necessary to procure even the basest job at SAGA by illegal means. (His best one was still his threat to pitch such easy balls that anyone could hit a homer through a Commons plate-glass window.) He had to donate beer to SAGA to keep his beverage boy status. His graduation was as much of a sham as Stone Row is. He made it through only because every professor would rather graduate him than write all those "Q"s in big red letters all over his papers all over again.

Although Art wasn't smart, he had his moments. Even if he had another person put in legible form those famous columns for this selfsame humble newspaper, he contributed most of the ideas that made them so scandalous. And at one time, yes, he did rewrite an incoherent Stuart Levine psychology paper for me. I never looked at the finished product, but it passed. (Sorry, Stuart.)

STEPHEN KING (from page 9)

The clutter is a minor matter, arising primarily from King's wish to portray evil in an ordinary setting. King attempts this by bombarding the reader with a series of unnecessary detail usually involving endless lists of brand names, and ends up with the banal instead of the ordinary. But this is secondary to the major problem.

The present tendency in the field of horror, both cinematic and literary, is to evoke audience response by representation of graphic gore and violence. In *Carrie*, the blood was an integral symbol, starting with Carrie's first menstruation and ending with the slaughter at the prom. In this case, the gore is necessary to King's image. In his later novels, however, such instances of bloody violence work against the themes he is presenting by literalizing them where they ought to remain abstract. This becomes almost sadistic at times. Blood can be fun, as Robert Bloch and others of his ilk have proved, but not when one senses that a novel is not meant to be fun, that it is meant to convey something deeper. King tries to be all things to all men, to provide something for everyone, ideas and cheap thrills, and in doing so, he cuts his own throat.

Of course, King is probably content to churn out books that sell millions and will be forgotten in a short time. Or thinks he is content. It is obvious that he has something to say, but refuses to say it effectively, perhaps for fear that no one will listen. And perhaps, considering the majority of the American reading public, he's right. ■

I was sorry to see Art go, if only for those moments when he would get weird and fey, and start carrying on an articulate conversation. "You see, Brucie, I found the best way to dodge through though English papers is to find out what the teacher liked and serve that to him. Because what most teachers here actually want you to do is so much easier than what they think you should do. And if you cater to them, they'll be so grateful that one of their students actually was considerate of them and didn't just say, 'Well, screw you, Ben, I'll do what I want 'cause I'm paying \$9000 a year to do just that' that they won't notice what a miserable job you did, or even what a miserable student you are."

There are no concrete details available about Art's tragic manner of death, because he simply disappeared. I personally believe he was the cause of the great Albany fire of last month, when he ignited his hair while trying to light one joint too many, then jumped into the refinery-polluted Hudson River up there. Another theory has it that he attempted to begin use of hard drugs and snorted too much Coca-Cola instead of the real thing, thus dying of coke inhalation. Whatever his end was, I'm sure it was fitting. Art, I promise you that for my remaining days, I will throw a SAGA hat in the Hudson every year, in your memory. ■

New Financial Head

Tom Carroll

Gerald Kelly has assumed the duties of Head of Financial Aid for Bard College and the 450 students who receive some sort of aid. The position was vacated on the first of August by Bob Reese, who left to take a job at Cornell University. Mr. Kelly comes directly from Marist College where he worked as Head of Residential Life and Financial Aid since 1972.

Mr. Kelly was ordained a Catholic priest after studying at Pontifical College in Columbus, Ohio, and at the Catholic University in Washington, D. C. After serving as a priest for seven years, he resigned from the church in order to get married. Present Catholic law forbids marriage for priests within the Church. Mr. Kelly will not change his residence in Staatsburg, New York, to work at Bard. ■

(PUNK,FUNK,JUNK from 9)

hope that the shows will improve; and hope that the students will be able to show their work -- a right that one would expect, yet is seldom offered.

Grim as all this sounds, things are getting better. Again this year, we are honored to have Hugo Munsterberg, a Bard Fellow and former head of the Art History Department at SUNY New Paltz, teach a course in the Art of Africa and Oceania. Matt Phillips, the head of the department, and Murray Reich have returned from sabbatical, so all of the professors are here this year. There are more art students than ever before and there are many projects in the air. There is going to be a student show at Procter during November and many other non-department shows elsewhere. Also, an Art Department magazine, BARDART, is in the works.

So kids, don't get depressed and feel limited or bound by the classical approach taught in the classes. Remember, it is only through repetition and discipline that we can develop a working aesthetic and vocabulary of our own. ■

SYLVANIA FARMS PERFORMANCE

"Common Sky -- Seven Miracles of Summer", an outdoors performance, will be held at Sylvania Farms beginning at 3 pm on October 4. The production, by Jeanne Flemming, has been described as "an afternoon of colors, miracles, and flying birds." If you plan on attending, be prepared to walk, and bring a blanket or two.

Admission is \$1.00 for adults; children are admitted free. ■

CALENDAR

ARTS AT THE COLLEGE AT NEW PALTZ

September 30, Tuesday -- ENRIQUE GARDANO, guitar, 8:30
 October 7, Tuesday -- GENE RANDOLPH, jazz ensemble, 8:30
 October 14, Tuesday -- MUSIC FOR FLUTE AND HARPSICHORD, 8:30
 October 21, Tuesday -- MUSIC FOR WOODWINDS AND STRINGS, 8:30

FILMS AT SOTTERY

October 1, Wednesday -- Zero for Conduct by Jean Vigo, 7:30 and 10
 October 3, Friday -- Pather Panchali by Satyajit Ray, 7:30 and 10
 October 5, Sunday -- Rebel Without a Cause by Nicholas Ray, starring James Dean and Sal Mineo, 7:30 and 10
 October 6, Monday -- Industrial Britain and Power and the Land

PERFORMING ARTS AT BARD

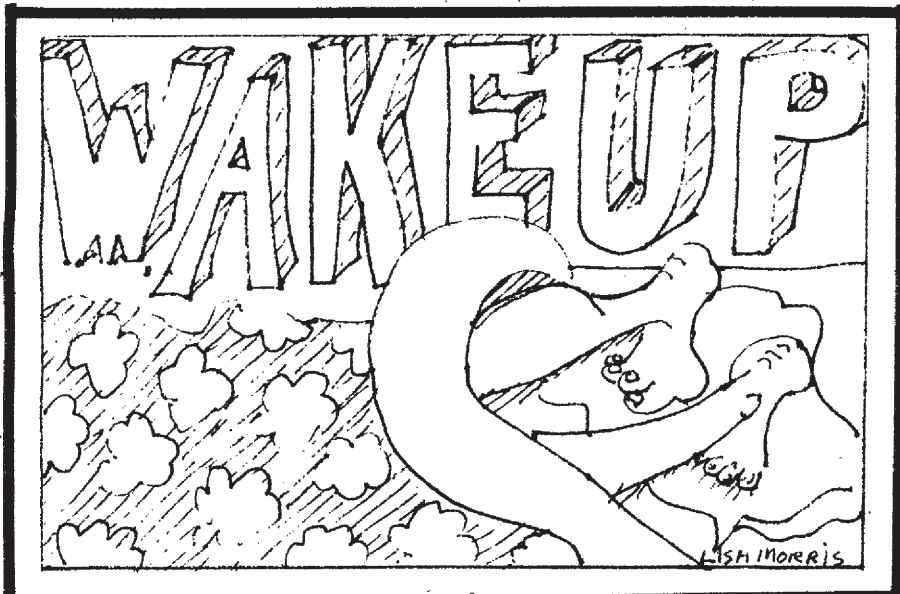
October 4-7, Saturday-Tuesday -- Little Boxes by John Bowen, directed by William Driver, The Great Hall of Preston
 October 18-21, Saturday-Tuesday -- Dance Theater III, New Theater Building

FILMS IN NEW YORK CITY

Bad Timing/A Sensual Obsession by Nicolas Roeg, starring Art Garfunkel and Harvey Keitel
Stardust Memories, another neurotic film by neurotic Woody Allen, starring, written and directed (neurotically) by Woody Allen
La Cage Aux Folles, a drag film critically acclaimed because it's from France

THEATER IN NEW YORK CITY

Annie, sophomoric and sickeningly drippy musical, with dogs, orphans, and a little girl with blanked-out eyes
Sugar Babies, Mickey Rooney and Ann Miller in a vaudeville-type revue that asks the ultimate question, "WHY?"
 Do yourself a favor and go to the off-off Broadway theaters. It's cheaper, and, ultimately, more interesting. Check the pages of the Village Voice. Here are one or two recommendations:
Reverse Psychology, Charles Ludlam and the Ridiculous Theatrical Company. I saw them do Camille in Philadelphia, and they're a scream. (Well, not really, but it was funny.)
You Know Al He's a Funny Guy, Jerry "Taud Show" Mayer's one-man show about Albert Einstein. Don't laugh; from all reports, it's wonderful. At the Public Theater.



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